5.1 ISSUES PREVIOUSLY ADDRESSED / CONSIDERED LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

This section summarizes the issues that were either previously addressed in the PXP Phase IV Development Plan EIR (Phase IV EIR) and/or do not warrant further analysis as these impacts are considered less than significant.. As necessary, appropriate mitigation measures for Aesthetics, Cultural Resources, Paleontological Resources, Noise, and Traffic/Circulation have been carried over from the Phase IV EIR and would be incorporated into this SEIR accordingly. All impacts and mitigation measures associated with resource issue areas are discussed in further detail.

5.1.1 Aesthetics

The project is located in the Arroyo Grande Oil Field in Price Canyon, approximately three miles northeast of the City of Pismo Beach. Price Canyon is a scenic, rural valley amid rolling hills dotted with scattered oak trees. However, Price Canyon Road is not officially a designated as a scenic highway. The Union Pacific Railroad and Pismo Creek both parallel Price Canyon Road and the proposed project area to the east. Land uses in the vicinity of the project are primarily livestock grazing.

Price Canyon provides considerable scenic value due to the combination of grazing pastures, stands of mature oaks, the Pismo Creek watershed, rolling hills, and steep cliffs that are complimented by varying shades of brown, green, and gray. Although the existing oilfield interrupts the scenic value of this canyon, the overall aesthetic quality of the area is relatively high.

The Phase IV EIR analyzed Key Viewing Areas in association with implementation of that project. These represented views of operations existing at the time from different vantage points along Price Canyon Road.

The primary County policy documents that govern aesthetic issues in the project areas are the Inland Area Framework for Planning, the Agriculture and Open Space Element, and the County General Plan. The Energy and Extractive Areas Combining designation, which covers the project area, includes those areas designated as Rural Lands (i.e. Price Canyon/Ormonde Road Oilfield (EX)). These operations should not be expanded into adjacent land use categories or existing operations intensified without full review through a public hearing process. The scenic value of the Price Canyon should also be protected as an entry to the City of Pismo Beach.

Price Canyon Road is a north-south improved two-lane County road which extends from the City of Pismo Beach to State Route 227. Price Canyon Road bisects the Arroyo Grande Oil Field site and provides direct access to the site at the entrance located opposite Ormonde Road. The key viewing area in question is located several hundred yards further north and opposite an existing entrance to the site.

Construction of the new water reclamation facility and related structures would remove existing vegetation (including large oaks) and result in exposed soils during grading. Minor

slumping of cut slopes could also occur during construction. Grading and removal of existing vegetation would represent a short-term change and would require approximately 5.6 acres of ground disturbance and minimal to moderate grading. Furthermore, presence of construction equipment would also result in short-term minor aesthetic impacts. Construction-related equipment and associated activities would be most visible during construction of proposed pipeline routes to Pismo Creek and to proposed offsite re-use areas. As such, construction of the proposed project may result in temporary visual impacts to motorists traveling along Price Canyon Road, nearby residences, and passengers on Amtrak passenger trains traveling along the Union Pacific Railroad tracks through Price Canyon.

Because construction of the proposed project would take place within the previously analyzed project area, no mitigation of construction-related impacts to visual resources is necessary; however, implementation of the proposed project would require removal of 26 coast live oaks, which could reduce the visual quality of the area. As similar long-term impacts were identified in the Phase IV EIR, mitigation measures identified in that document's Biological Resources section would be similarly employed for the proposed project. In addition, Mitigation Measure BIO-6 (Section 5.3 - Biological Resources) from this SEIR would be implemented to reduce long-term impacts from removal of vegetation to the visual quality of the project area.

In addition, the project would introduce new facilities (e.g. air strippers) which may be visible from Price Canyon Road. The area of the water reclamation facility would generally be hidden by the existing topography.

On-site analysis determined that only the air strippers, which would be 14 feet in diameter and 70 feet in height, may be visible from Price Canyon Road; however, the proposed towers are not expected be silhouetted against the sky. This conclusion is based on the fact that the elevation of the building pad with existing and higher 85-foot towers, which would be in close proximity to the air strippers, is not silhouetted. Due to the potential visibility of these proposed towers to travelers on Price Canyon Road and associated potential impacts to the visual quality of surrounding slopes containing native vegetation (i.e. oak woodland), a painting color scheme would be incorporated into the project description (see Section 3.4.2), intended to blend in with the natural landscape. Additionally a lighting plan consistent with the existing use, including height limits and shielding requirements would also be incorporated into the project description to minimize any new aesthetic impacts due to lighting.

In summary, the new structures would generally not be highly visible either from Price Canyon Road or from nearby residences. The window of visual opportunity to the water reclamation facility would be several seconds or less based on typical motorist speeds along Price Canyon. Additionally, Price Canyon would be the only roadway in the area which could offer a view of the affected area and this view would last approximately three seconds at typical roadway speeds. Furthermore, new facilities associated with the proposed project would be constructed in an industrial area that is already heavily developed in oil-field operations. The new structures would not silhouette against the skyline, would be partially obscured by intervening topography and vegetation and would be considered consistent with the surrounding site. Given the short viewing frequency, intervening topography and vegetation, and plans for a

painting (color) and lighting scheme designed to blend into the surrounding site, aesthetic impacts are considered less than significant.

5.1.2 Agricultural Resources

The project area is located within the County's "Energy and Extractive Resource" area and does not include any agricultural operations. Properties adjacent to the project area support agricultural uses, and may potentially use the treated water produced by the proposed project for irrigation of non-edible crops; however, at this time, no formal agreements for re-use have been made concerning production of treated water. As such, the proposed project would not adversely affect agricultural resources in the area. Rather, for the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that re-use of treated water for agricultural irrigation would occur in the future. Re-use of treated water may potentially represent a beneficial impact to agricultural resources outside of the PXP property, as well as to groundwater resources, as re-use would result in an overall reduction to the drawdown of local groundwater supply for the life of the project. The produced water would not be treated to drinking water standards; therefore, water re-use would be limited to only agricultural users. Additionally, no significant impacts were identified in the Phase IV EIR.

5.1.3 Cultural Resources

Two cultural resources reports were prepared for the Phase IV EIR. These were entitled “Phase One Archaeological Surface Survey for the Shell Western E&P Project, Price Canyon Oil Field, San Luis Obispo, CA and “Results of Addendum Archaeological Surface Survey for a 65 Acre Area of the Plains Exploration and Production Phase IV Project, Price Canyon, San Luis Obispo County, CA, conducted by Robert O. Gibson, (1992, 2003), and review conducted by Mr. Gibson of the proposed project. The first survey conducted in 1992 included about 200 acres and the second survey performed in 2003 included 65 acres. Additionally, a Heritage Study was prepared as an addendum for the Phase IV area itself. Various recorded prehistoric sites in the project area were discussed and mapped.

The Information Center reported that since 1977, three previous surveys had been conducted, Robert Hoover (1977, 1978) and W.B. Sawyer (1989) and had identified three prehistoric archaeological sites (SLO-353, SLO-652, and SLO-1266) and one historic archaeological site, the Corral de Piedra (Stone Corral). Site records were updated for the Hoover sites: SLO-353 and SLO 652. These two sites are part of the same site that has been divided by Price Canyon Road. The construction of this road, done prior to 1964, also unearthed three Chumash burials.

SLO-353. SLO-353 is a prehistoric site, located east of Price Canyon Road and first recorded in 1963 by H.L. and L.D. Wadhams. It was re-recorded in 1969 by Charles Dills and again in 1977 by Robert Hoover. The site measures about 200 meters east-west and 150 meters north-south. The site contains a concentration of weathered small shellfish fragments consisting of at least nine species from both sandy beach and rocky coast environments (probably Pismo Beach and Shell Beach areas). Ground stone and chipped stone tools and debitage (by-products from stone tool manufacture) were present in low to medium densities.

One projectile point (arrowhead) may be stemmed form suggesting a Middle period occupation perhaps 1,000 to 2,500 years ago.

At the eastern part of the site is a 15 by 20 meter sandstone outcrop that contains at least 18 bedrock mortars. A second small outcrop has two additional mortars.

SLO-652. SLO-652 is located west of Price Canyon Road and would have originally been connected to SLO-353 before the road was cut. This site was first recorded by Charles Dills in 1972 and measures about 150 meters east-west and 200 meters north-south. The northern 1/3 of the site contains a concentration of weathered shellfish fragments (same species as SLO-353) in a dark gray to black sandy soil. The other 2/3 of the site consists of trace to low densities of chipped stone materials with rare shell fragments.

One larger and three smaller low bedrock outcrops contain mortar depressions that are, overall, deeper than the outcrop at SLO-353 but fewer in number. The main shell concentration is located just north of the larger rock outcrop.

In 1977 Robert Hoover directed subsurface testing at SLO-652. Two 1 by 1 meter test units were excavated and 200 soil samples were collected for pH analysis. The test units recovered burnt rock, chert flakes and cores, boiling stones, small shell fragments and bone. Projectile and biface knife fragments suggest Middle period of occupation for both sites (1,000 to 3,000 years old).

SLO-1266. SLO-1266 is a small prehistoric site recorded in 1989 by W. B. Sawyer. It is located just north of Tiber Canyon Road and consists of a gentle sloping terrace measuring 50 by 100 meters. Noted were a concentration of chert flakes with rare shell fragments (same at the other two sites), burnt rock and some bedrock mortars. No new information was gathered in the 1992 survey.

5.1.3.1 Impacts and Mitigation from the Original Phase IV EIR

As the proposed project would take place entirely within the Phase IV project area, no new impacts to cultural resources, including archaeological sites, are anticipated. The pipelines are located above ground and the route would be designed to avoid existing resources. Under the Phase IV EIR, significant impacts were identified if construction activities were to disturb any of the above-listed archaeological sites. The proposed Pismo Creek outfall and optional re-use pipelines would not intersect archaeological resource sites previously identified under the Phase IV EIR. However, in the event construction of the proposed project results in inadvertent damage to historic, cultural, archaeological, and/or human remains, Mitigation Measure CUL-1 shall be carried over and incorporated into the proposed project. Impacts are considered less than significant after implementation of this mitigation.

Mitigation Measure CUL-1: In the event that unknown cultural remains are encountered anywhere within the project area during construction, activities shall be terminated or redirected to another area until a qualified archaeologist can be retained to evaluate the potential significance of the finds in a Phase 2 archaeological significance investigation or PXP shall have

the option to relocate work permanently without need to conduct further studies at that location. Relocation of work and any subsequent archaeological investigation would be done in consultation with the County of San Luis Obispo. If the remains are significant and cannot be feasibly avoided, then a Phase 3 data recovery mitigation program shall be performed by a qualified archaeologist, and all construction activity within the site and 150-foot buffer area shall be monitored by a qualified archaeologist and Native American monitor. All Phase 3 significance assessments and Phase 3 mitigation activities shall be funded by the applicant.

5.1.4 Paleontological Resources

For the Phase IV EIR, Cogstone Resource Management conducted paleontological reconnaissance surveys over ten days from July 17 to August 28, 2003. The survey was conducted on foot and both samples and representative fossils were collected. The survey covered all of the proposed Phase IV project area plus a large portion of the PXP lease holding in the Arroyo Grande Oilfield.

The field surveys of the PXP holdings within the Arroyo Grande Oil Field identified five fossil-bearing sites. Fossils found during these surveys were whales (mandible, bone fragments), seal/sea lion (fibula), shrimp (burrows), shark (tooth) and bony fish (tooth). The shark tooth may represent an unnamed species. Only one of these five sites is located within the Phase IV project area, near well pad Maino 18J, where fossil whale and seal/sea lion bones were found.

5.1.4.1 Impacts and Mitigation from the Original Phase IV EIR

The presence of both vertebrate and invertebrate fossils in the major submembers of the Edna Member of the Pismo Formation indicates that these entire geological units have the potential to contain scientifically important vertebrate and invertebrate fossils. A paleontological mitigation monitoring plan addressing the potential for grading and excavation activities to uncover and adversely affect paleontological resources was developed and implemented for the Phase IV project (see Mitigation Measure PAL-1). Although the proposed project is highly disturbed by oil field operations for the Phase IV project, the mitigation monitoring plan would also apply to the SEIR as potential adverse affects on paleontological resources are highly site-specific. The most likely potential impact that could occur would be from accidental discovery of fossils; however, due to the level of disturbance at the project site (including roadways), this is considered unlikely. Mitigation measure PAL-1 would be applied in the event paleontological resources are discovered during land-disturbing activities. Impacts are considered less than significant after implementation of this mitigation.

Mitigation Measure PAL-1: Prior to ~~approval of the project~~construction, the applicant shall retain a qualified paleontologist to implement the paleontological mitigation monitoring plan developed for the Phase IV EIR that includes the following:

1. Prior to construction, the applicant would retain a qualified paleontologist to implement the mitigation plan and maintain professional standards of work;

2. A qualified monitor would perform full-time monitoring of all grading, enlargement of pads and all other open excavation work in native sediments. Monitoring would include inspection of exposed surfaces and microscopic examination of matrix. The monitor would have authority to divert grading away from exposed resources temporarily in order to recover the specimens and contextual data. PXP shall have the option to relocate work permanently without need to conduct further studies at that location. Relocation of work and any subsequent paleontological investigation would be done in consultation with the County of San Luis Obispo. Cooperation and assistance from on-site personnel would greatly assist timely resumption of work in the area of the discovery;

3. If the discovery meets the criteria for a fossil locality, formal locality documentation activities would be performed;

4. If microfossil localities are discovered, locality documentation activities shall include the collection of matrix material for processing. These activities may include use of equipment to excavate fossil-containing soils, and establishment of stockpiles away from the construction area. Testing of stockpiles shall consist of screen washing small samples (200 pounds) to determine if fossils are present. Productive tests shall result in screen washing of additional matrix from the stockpiles to a maximum of 6000 pounds per locality;

5. Fossils recovered shall be prepared, identified and cataloged, and donated to an accredited repository approved by the County of San Luis Obispo. Any resources determined not to meet significance criteria shall be offered to local schools for use in educational programs; and,

6. The principal investigator shall prepare monthly progress reports to be filed with the applicant and the County of San Luis Obispo. The principal investigator shall prepare a final report to be filed with the applicant and the County of San Luis Obispo. The report shall include a list of resources recovered; documentation of each site/locality, interpretation of resources recovered and shall include all specialists' reports as appendices.

5.1.5 Noise

The noise generation at the proposed project site consists of existing oil field facilities and operations. Noise-sensitive receptors within the region of influence of the proposed project include scattered single-family residences located north of the proposed project near Corral de Piedra Road, houses to the northwest located along State Route 227, and homes to the south of the project site in Pismo Beach located along ridge tops with a view to the north. These scattered residential areas are generally a mile or more away from the project area and tend to be located within moderate to steeply sloping topography.

5.1.5.1 Impacts and Mitigation from the Original Phase IV EIR

Short-term impacts from the proposed project would consist of noise generated by construction equipment, vehicles associated with grading, excavation/trenching, and erection of structures. Long-term impacts are generally not anticipated as operations associated with production of treated water would be introduced into an area of existing oil field operations. No substantial increase in truck trips per day would occur as a result of the project. Per the Initial Study prepared for the water reclamation facility, there are no project facilities that would substantially increase noise levels over current levels in the project area. Noise impacts that may be generated during construction and operation of the proposed project would be consistent with the existing industrial noise environment in the area. Standard construction noise mitigation would apply. Impacts are considered less than significant after implementation of this mitigation.

Mitigation Measure NOI-1: No use of heavy equipment or vehicles for the purpose of construction activities shall occur between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m., to the extent feasible.

5.1.6 Traffic and Circulation

The analysis procedures used in this study to determine roadway operational levels are based on information previously documented in the 2001 Traffic and Circulation Study for the Stocker Resources Arroyo Grande Oil Field Phase IV Project, prepared by Associated Transportation Engineers (ATE). The report provides information relative to existing and future traffic conditions within the study area adjacent to the project site, and evaluates impacts related to both the construction and ongoing operations phases of the proposed project.

ATE analyzed the operational characteristics of the roadway segments within the study area based on standard engineering roadway design capacities. ATE identified construction-related traffic as a less than significant impact, using an estimate of 138 total daily trips at worst-case. Existing volumes for the street segments in the study area were obtained from machine counts completed in August 2001 by ATE and from Caltrans (Caltrans, 2000). Cumulative effects of the project with 2021 forecasts were shown to be less than significant. Comparison of the existing ADT volumes and the corresponding design capacity for each roadway segment shows that all of the study-area roadways currently operate acceptably in the LOS A-C range. Considering the conclusions of the Phase IV EIR, the relatively small increase in the ADT beyond what was analyzed by ATE, traffic impacts are considered less than significant.

5.1.6.1 Impacts and Mitigation from the Original Phase IV EIR

Based on the traffic analysis prepared for the Phase IV EIR, the LOS for the project area roadway segments analyzed would not be degraded. Truck trips are discussed in detail in Section 3.4.4. Although specific routes to the project area not yet established, it is expected that trucks would be using Price Canyon Road via U.S. 101, or Highway 227. Entering and exiting of construction vehicles during installation of the proposed water reclamation facility may reduce traffic safety on Price Canyon Road during the A.M. and P.M. peak hour. As such,

Mitigation Measure TRA-1, contained in the Phase IV EIR, shall be carried over and implemented, resulting in less than significant impacts:

Mitigation Measure TRA-1:

- Trucks (delivery, hauling and transportation trucks) should be scheduled outside the a.m. and p.m. peak period (7:00 to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.) to the extent feasible (no increase in trucks trips would occur during the a.m. and p.m. peak periods)[1];
- Construction related traffic shall use on-site roads wherever possible; and,
- Warning signs shall be placed on Price Canyon Road prior to construction to notify through traffic of trucks entering and exiting the site.

5.1.7 Additional Issues with No Impact

The following issues were deemed to have no impacts during preliminary environmental analysis conducted as part of the initial application phase of the Phase IV Development Plan, which is consistent with the currently proposed project:

- **Population/Housing** - The proposed project would not substantially alter the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area. The proposed project would not adversely affect existing housing, or create a demand for additional housing;
- **Public Services** - The project would not have an effect upon, or result in, a need for new or altered public services;
- **Energy** - The proposed project would not result in the use of substantial amounts of fuel or energy or substantially increase demand upon existing sources of energy above that currently required and proposed by the approved Phase IVE Expansion project, or require the development of new sources of energy;
- **Utilities** - The proposed project would not result in a need for new systems, or substantial alterations to existing utilities; and,
- **Recreation** - The proposed project would not affect the quality or quantity of existing recreational opportunities.

[1] This shall include trucks traveling onto Highway 101 from Price Canyon Road.